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ABSTRACT

The use of program evaluators at the local school district level is a relatively new development. Successful program evaluation can be defined as the ability to collect and produce program data that influence decision-making and the ability to maintain the credibility of the evaluation unit. This paper examines one successful evaluation unit in a middle-sized urban school district (Lansing, Michigan). Evaluators assist in needs assessment, definition of program objectives design of evaluation (in conjunction with program staff), as well as provide feedback information to management and staff, report findings to decisicn-makers, follow up outcomes of evaluator recommendations, and reexamine needs and goals. In order to overcome potential negative reactions to program evaluation, evaluators must be concerned with maintaining good interpersonal relations with program staff members. (Author/DS)

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"The Role of the Internal Program Evaluator in the Public School Setting"

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"The Role of the Internal Program Evaluator in the Public School Setting"

You are all familiar with the practice of the fifth century Greeks of executing the harbinger of bad tidings. Many a primordial messenger was slain for delivering messages of gloom. Unfortunately, program evaluators often find themselves cast in a similar fate. When reports are prepared and published that indicate particular programs, processes or products do not meet the predetermined expectations, evaluators are often doomed to face the proverbial lynch mob once again.

When external evaluators are contracted, the solution to an unfavorable report is simple enough -- hire another evaluation team. When the evaluators are part of the school district operating the programs the answer is more difficult.

The use of program evaluators at the local school district level is a relatively new and growing field. Several definable factors exist which relate to successful program evaluation. Successful program evaluation can be described as the ability to collect and produce program data which impact decision-making and the ability to maintain the creditability of the evaluation unit.

This paper examines one "successful" evaluation unit in a middle-sized urban school district. The philosophy employed and the theoretical framework which led to the evaluation unit's success is defined from the viewpoints of an internal evaluator employed by the school district, a state department of education evaluator who is external to the local program and a privately contracted evaluation consultant who is not associated with local or state evaluation units. The methodology employed was observational techniques and interview.

INTRODUCTION

As educational resources (dollars) decrease and the burden on the tax payer increases the need for sound educational decisions becomes more acute. State and Federal dollars are increasingly tied to comprehensive program evaluation and needs assessment. Citizens, both the consumers and stockholders of the educational product and process, have become more cognizant of their rights and their expectations have increased. Lay people are becoming increasingly disillusioned with the educational system as it exist and have expressed this disillusionment by way of voting down millage increases, calling for compentency based exit skills testing of high school students and in general calling for greater levels of educational accountability on the part of educational agencies. Consumers are demanding to see a greater return on their educational dollar.

Agencies which fund educational programs are increasingly requiring that evaluative data be submitted which describe the outcomes of the program funded. Millions of dollars are poured into school districts annually to fund special programs and projects which address specific educational needs. Little meaningful data has been available to the funding agencies (not to mention the general public) to determine the success or failure of the programs funded or their utility, replicability or generalizability.

Based in part on these influences, school districts have begun to develop mechanisms for providing program evaluation.

The need for systematic program evaluation is not only expressed from outside. Pressures from within the educational system are illuminating the need for systematic methods of providing useful information to decision-makers.

In response to the need to provide data to funding agencies, decision-makers and to serve accountability, evaluation units have sprung up.

This paper will present a review of program evaluation as it operates in the Lansing School District.

This paper does not represent a Meta-Evaluation. Meta-Evaluation for the purposes of this paper is defined as the evaluation of an evaluation, or the evaluation of an evaluation unit or team. The author chooses to be less formal and to present this as an evaluator looking at the evaluation unit from within. The paper also serves as a forum for the evaluator to step back from the evaluation process in which she is engaged and look at the role and utility of that evaluation in the urban school setting. The authors will attempt to look at a larger issue than the evaluation of a particular program by reviewing the role which the evaluation unit undertakes and the philosophy to which the evaluation team espouses.

This paper is intended to be useful to practicing evaluators as a framework for looking at their modus operandi and relationship to their clients. Administrators may also find utility in the paper as a vehicle for looking at the way the evaluation unit in their district is operating and the priorities of the unit.

The authors have chosen to stay away from the technical topics related to evaluation such as validation of instrumentation, methods of establishing testing programs, etc. The paper will focus on the interface (see Stufflebeam, et. al. 1971) functions of the evaluator.

"The Role of the Internal Program Evaluator in the Public School Setting"

The Lansing School District is a middle sized urban school district with a student population of approximately 30,000 students. Lansing is a desegregated school district with a minority population of approximately 30%. Lansing receives approximately $6,000,000 in State and Federal categorical funds. Among the categorically funded programs in Lansing are:

Emergency School Aid Act
ESEA, Title I
Chapter 3, of the Michigan School Aid Act
ESEA, Title I Migrant
Michigan Department of Education Bilingual
ESEA, Title I, Pre-School
Gardening Project
Teacher Corps
Adult Basic Education
Alternative Education Program

The Office of Evaluation Services was first begun as a branch of the research and planning unit and then was established as a unit in 1971. The staff currently consists of a director, assistant director, six evaluation assistants and two evaluation technicians. The School District maintains a research and planning unit, in addition to its Office of Evaluation Services. The five functions of the school district are defined as, planning, operations, finance, communications, and evaluation.

The evaluation and planning processes in Lansing are complimentary functions. Evaluation aids planning in the preparation of proposals for funding. A representative of the Office of Evaluation Services serves on the planning team.

With forty-seven elementary schools and nine secondary schools, the

Lansing School District is decentralized and operates under a philosophy of responsible building autonomy. Evaluation in Lansing is designed to serve responsible building autonomy. Responsible autonomy contends that educational decisions are best made at the level closest to the student; that is, at the program level. In order for this scheme to work data must be readily available to the decisions-makers. Support must also be available for interpretation and identification of data and alternative strategies for meeting identified needs.

Educational program evaluation is defined as ..."the process of delineating, obtaining and providing useful information for judging decision alternatives."[1]

The purpose of evaluation as defined by the Office of Evaluation Services is to provide information to decision-makers to aid in program planning (context), structuring (input), implementation (process) and recycling (product) decisions (classically referred to as formative evaluation, Scriven, 1967). Evaluation also serves accountability by providing data to accertain the extent to which program objectives were accomplished (summative evaluation, Scriven, 1967).

Following are fourteen steps which have been identified as representing the evaluation process. Note that evaluation ideally begins early in the program planning stage. Evaluation commences with needs assessment and identification of program goals and objectives. Evaluators design evaluations in collaboration with program planners, and program management and in some cases program staff.

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[1]Stufflebeam, Daniel L., et.al.; "Educational Evaluation and Decision-Making", Phi Delta Kappa, 1971, pg. XXV.

Steps in Evaluation Process

1) Conduct, assist program decision-makers in conducting Needs Assessment.
2) Assist program decision-makers in establishing and delineating program goals.*
3) Assist in establishing program process and product objectives.
4) Meet with program staff to determine evaluation needs; questions to be answered, data needed, program constraints and criteria of success.
5) Design evaluation, identify needed data.
6) Communicate evaluation design to program director, identify management and staff responsibilities.
7) Develop or identify instrumentation.
8) Conduct evaluation as designed.
9) Provide interim feedback to management and staff as appropriate.
10) Report findings of evaluation to decision-makers.
11) Present evaluation findings on request to secondary audiences.
12) Follow-up on outcome of evaluators' recommendations.
13) Re-assess needs.
14) Re-examine goals and objectives, measurement instruments, processes.

*Steps two through six often occur concurrently.

AUDIENCE OF EVALUATION REPORTS

Evaluation reports are sent to decision-makers representing a number of audiences. Below, the various audiences to whom evaluation reports are traditionally addressed and which they serve are identified.

Primary - (to whom reports are typically addressed and disseminated)

- Superintendent
- Deputy Superintendent for Planning
- Deputy Superintendent for Operations
- Assistant Superintendent
- Superintendent's Cabinet
- Project Coordinator/Director
- Office of State and Federal Programs
- Office of State and Federal Relations
- Office of Information Services
- Office of Elementary Education
- Office of Secondary Education
- Funding Agencies
- Target Building Principal
- Board of Education
- Michigan Department of Education
- Others specifically identified in program proposal

Secondary - (results reported informally or by meetings by Office of Evaluation Services staff -- generally by request)

- Staff of programs
- Project target school
- Community Involvement Committees

Tertiary - (not directly reported by Office of Evaluation Services discretionary upon primary audiences)

- Building staff
- Community Involvement Committees
- Students

The Office of Evaluation Services in Lansing sees itself as service oriented. Evaluation staff work with program and project directors and staff and help them to clarify their goals and objectives.

Evaluators serve as high intensity reflectors with the ability to portray the program from various light and magnification settings. The program decision-makers can see their program reflected from different light intensities and different degrees of proximity. By acting as a recorder, and playing back what has been recorded, evaluators constantly remind programs of their stated goals and objectives and assist programs to continually reassess their goals, objectives, delivery systems and processes. Evaluators remind program staff and decision-makers to continually check the match between program goals and objectives. Programs often become impressed by delivery systems and processes which "work well" but have no impact on program goals and objectives. By the same token evaluators try not to dogmatically adhere to stated goals and objectives, but to reassess the utility of the chosen goals and objectives in the framework of an ever changing program environment. An example of programs tenaciously clinging to criteria of success and product objectives which do not represent the program is the case of the Alternative Education Program. The program stated as a product objective that a certain percent of the program's target students would "re-enter" the traditional high school after a specified amount of time enrolled in the alternative program. The objective remained the same into the second and third year of the program, while the philosophy of the project director, staff, school administration, funding agency and students shifted toward the program

*See page 25 for a list of the services which the Office of Evaluation Services provides.

maintaining students and allowing students to graduate through the program. Program staff and other decision-makers informally pointed to the number of graduates from their program as a sign of the program's success or merit, while allowing the "official" criteria of success stated in the proposal for funding to read that priority would be placed on students leaving the program. The discrepancy between program stated goals and objectives and operational objectives or philosophy was pointed out by the evaluator working with the program and she assisted the program to identify goals and objectives more consistent with program priorities and existing needs.

FUNDING

The Office of Evaluation Services is funded by both categorical programs and board of education funding. The categorical funding represents 30% state funding and 30% federal funding. The Board of Education funds the remaining forty percent of the evaluation budget. The Office of Evaluation Services also contracts with outside agencies to conduct evaluation activities. The major portion of the funding of the office is dependent upon categorical programs. As state and federal dollars fluctuate, the budget of the office fluctuates. The staffing pattern of the office helps to absorb the fluctuation in funding.

STAFF

Evaluation Assistants are currently required to have a BA degree. They are employed twelve months and earn between $12,925 to $15,274 (with no overtime pay). Evaluation Assistants get four weeks vacation per year. Evaluation Technicians are required to have a high school diploma or equivalent and earn from $7,944 to $10,213 per year. Technicians work twelve months and get ten days vacation. Staff are assigned to a number of projects. Generally, no one staff member will spend one hundred percent of their time with a project. Often more than one evaluator is assigned to a project.

STAFF EVALUATION

The Director and Assistant Director of Evaluation Services evaluate the staff yearly. Each staff member and the Assistant Director fill out a form indicating perceived areas of growth, strengths and needs. The Assistant Director and staff members then meet with the Director and negotiate the final evaluation. Once finalized, the form goes into

the staff member's personnel file.

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

Evaluators hired by the office generally have little or no previous experience in program evaluation. Evaluators are hired for their skills in inter-personal relations, communication, listening and problem solving. Evaluators initially pick up skills from co-workers, reviewing the literature and reviewing evaluation reports, proposals and evaluation designs. All staff are encouraged to take classes and training courses. The office is currently sponsoring a Masters Program in Educational Leadership with a speciality in Evaluation through Western Michigan University.

EVALUATION OF OFFICE; META EVALUATION

The Office of Evaluation Services requested that an audit (Meta Evaluation) be conducted. Mary Ann Bunda of Western Michigan University's Center for Evaluation conducted the audit.

Evaluation Services has also asked consultants to review evaluation reports.

ROLE OF STATISTICIANS, PSYCHOMETRICIANS AND RESEARCHERS

At this point most of the reports produced by evaluation services do not require sophisticated statistical analysis, i.e., multi-variate analysis, reliability indexes, etc. In cases where higher level analysis of data is required, Evaluation Services contracts with consultants to analyze the data. Evaluation staff are developing their skills in statistical analysis of data through Master and

Doctoral degree programs and training sessions. The priority for the office has been to first develop the interface characteristics of the staff (while contracting for the statistical skills).

KEY CONCEPTS WHICH AID IN EVALUATION

The following concepts have been identified as aiding in the evaluation process in Lansing.

A. Evaluation as system support, service oriented.

Evaluation staff visualize themselves as service oriented. Evaluators do not go into a school or program office with the attitude of "we're going to do an evaluation to you". The attitude is instead one of preparing and conducting an evaluation in conjunction with building and program staff. Evaluators provide technical assistance to programs, schools and district staff on request.

B. Interface between evaluators and decision-makers; providing continuous feedback, two-way communication.

The interface between evaluators and program decision-makers is well established. Evaluators spend much time meeting formally and informally with school district decision-makers and establishing rapport. Evaluators provide continuous feedback to program decision-makers and solicit feedback on an on-going basis from decision-makers. Evaluators maintain a two-way communication network with decision-makers to allow for input and immediate feedback from all parties.

C. Community Involvement.

Evaluation is used as a mechanism for supporting community involvement.

Responsible Autonomy and the planning process as described in Lansing are contingent upon community involvement. By providing evaluation data to Community Involvement Committees and training committees to utilize the data in decision-making the role of the community in the decision-making process is strengthened.

D. Evaluators pass on skills to decision-makers.

As the evaluation process is implemented, evaluators pass on evaluation, needs assessment and data analysis skills to program managers and staff. This is exemplified by a workshop conducted by evaluation staff which provided skills in preparing packaged programs for statistical data analysis (SPSS).

E. Help programs to articulate discrepancies between program priorities and district priorities (if any exist).

Ideally, the district and program priorities match and any discrepancies between the two are identified in the program planning stage. However, in innovative programs and in some cases in specially funded programs priorities may not precisely match those of the school district. Where discrepancies exist, evaluators help decision-makers realize these differences.

F. Futuristic Approach.

Evaluators need to maintain a futuristic approach to evaluation and the programs which they serve. Solutions to needs identified today should be examined for their impact on the program in the future. Realities such as pending legislation, uncertainty over continued funding of categorically funded programs and the impact of declining school enrollments should be taken into consideration as evaluators

help to plan and review programs and as they make recommendations for program revision.

G. Multi-disciplinary approach to evaluation.

Evaluators must be able to hear and represent the concerns of a variety of audiences. Evaluators often come from a background which includes degrees (usually a B.A. and frequently Masters and above) in Education or Psychology. They are generally from a fairly middle class background and place a high priority on the role of education and scientific inquiry. The values of some of the consumers of the educational product may be much different. Audiences may consist of parents and members of the community who have traditionally had negative contact with the schools. Evaluators must be able to hear the concerns of people who place high priority issues such as:

- Cost-effectiveness of education.
- Socialization effects of education.
- Education as a means of increasing a persons life chances (jobs, money, etc.)

I. Ability to visualize innovative alternatives.

Key roles of the evaluator include assisting program decision-makers with planning and structuring decisions. The decision-makers must weigh various alternatives and choose the alternative which best meets the program needs. It is a disservice to the program and to the field of education for evaluators to continually offer the same reused alternative if other equally appropriate alternatives exist. Evaluators must be able to identify innovative alternatives as well as the "tried-but-true". Evaluators must, therefore, keep abreast of developments in areas such as:

- Cogntive style mapping.
- Alternative Education programs.
- Reading Miscue research.
- The role of school climate in student achievement.
- Methods of measuring affective domain.
- Teacher expectation and student achievement.

J. Knowledge of factors influencing decision-making.

The evaluator must be aware of the political realities and factors influencing the decision-making process. Program decision-makers do not act in a vacuum. They also do not act only on the information provided by the evaluator. This point seems to be fairly self-explanatory. Legislation concerning "main streaming" special education students, resolutions passed by local boards of education regarding basic skill compentencies for high school graduation, laws and policies enacted concerning student and parent rights to privacy, all effect the decision making milieu in which the evaluator interacts.

Role of Evaluation and Program Management

Program evaluation as described in Lansing is a tool to aid in program management.

Desmond L. Cook, describes the functions of management to be, to plan, organize, direct and control.

In Lansing evaluation facilitates the management functions in the following manner.

1. Planning

   Evaluation assists in the managerial function of planning by assisting the project manager to identify, obtain, and analyse needs assessment data. Additionally evaluators aid projects in identifying and articulating project goals and objectives.

   Evaluators assist the project managers to identify alternative plans (delivery systems or processes) and to select between various possible inputs.

2. Organizing

   Evaluators assist the program managers to identify and establish activities and processes to achieve the project goals and objectives. The evaluators accomplish this by way of process objectives. The process objectives and supporting activities help the program manager delineate a timeline or flowchart of activities and to determine if the project is accomplishing the necessary tasks to be successfully completed.

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2. Cook, Desmond L., "Educational Project Management"; Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co. Columbus Ohio, 1971.

3. Directing

The evaluator aids in directing decisions through process evaluation activities. Again process objectives and supporting activities assist the manager in directing staff activities and in determining when time schedules are not being met.

4. Controlling

The management function of controlling is served by evaluation through supplying information to the program decision makers, which aid in accountability and recycling decisions. Evaluators supply data which facilitate the project management in determining if process outcomes and tasks occurred as planned. Information is provided, which allows the manager to determine if program product objectives were met. Recommendations are made by evaluators to aide in planning, structuring and recycling decisions. Evaluators maintain close contact with program decision-makers and continually feed back data.

Program Reactions To Evaluation

Systematic program evaluation is a new experience to some of the programs and staff in the school district. We have identified some fairly common reactions to program evaluation.

1. The "We never had these problems before" syndrome.

We have found that when evaluators begin to work with established educational programs, they encounter a syndrome which we shall call the "We never had these problems before" syndrome. As the evaluator goes about his or her job of aiding the project staff and decision makers to articulate and identify program needs and to look at program processes and outcomes in light of the identified needs, programs find that what were once thought to be very efficient, successful, desirable delivery systems, processes and outcomes become mediocre or even counter productive, in light of identified needs. Program managers and staff often become suddenly disillusioned by the overwhelming amount of need identified and the seeming failure of their program to meet those needs. It is difficult to get past these initial feelings of failure to the realization that these problems existed whether they were realized or not. Unfortunately, the needs identified are often the "hard issues", the deeply embedded needs which are more difficult to impact.

This syndrome often interacts with a general apprehension of evaluation. This apprehension is born out of a fear that the evaluator's mission is to judge the worth or non-worth of the program, and/or program staff.

At best, the evaluation process articulates needs and problems which

already exist and foresees problems likely to occur and compels program staff and decision makers to address these needs and problems.

2. The "Hang the messenger" syndrome.

A second mind-set which all too frequently afflicts program decision-makers, particularly those most closely involved in the operation of the program is the "Hang the messenger" syndrome.

Just as fifth century Greeks were pre-disposed to executing the harbinger of bad tidings, many contemporary program managers and staff exhibit a mind-set simular to their Greek predecessors. When evaluations are conducted and reported which indicate that the particular program, process or product does not meet the predetermined expectation the evaluators are all too often doomed to face the proverbial lynch mob.

Program managers and staff frequently carry out this lynching of the evaluator or evaluation team by accusing them of lack of objectivity, of acting as a tool of central administration, not really knowing what goes on in the program first hand, and of not being sympathetic to program values.

In Lansing, part of this problem is eliminated because the message is usually stated in terms of need. Evaluation findings are not presented or used as a way of saying "ah-ha, we've got you now."

3. The "Double Agent" syndrome.

Another syndrome which occasionally becomes evident when the evaluation is conducted by an evaluation team or evaluator who is part of a district in-house evaluation unit is the "Double Agent" syndrome. In this

case the project staff and manager perceive the evaluation team as "external evaluators" and thereby attribute negative traits to the in-house evaluation team. These traits usually include:

- -lack of sensitivity to the day-to-day operation of the program.
- -evaluators serving the interest of some external agent (i.e., funding agency, state department of education, behavioral psychologist, etc.).
- -evaluator being compelled to make negative findings in order to justify the role of evaluation.

In cases where this syndrome takes effect the evaluator is placed in the precarious position of having to exhibit internal creditability to program staff and external creditability to external audiences.

"CREEPING MANAGEMENTITIES"

A plague which often afflicts program evaluators is "Creeping Managementities". After working closely with programs, occasionally over several years and in some cases seeing program managers come and go evaluators can fall prey to "Creeping Managementities". Evaluators are in a unique position of having access to most of the data upon which program managers make program decisions. Evaluators work closely with the program and know the staff and program constraints and available resources. It becomes difficult if not impossible for the evaluator to avoid the temptation to play "arm-chair quarterback", and plan management strategies. This syndrome may indeed make for a healthier evaluator and program in that it may allow the evaluator the opportunity to compare his/her decisions to those of the program manager and where there are discrepancies in decisions an investigation may shed light on areas of fundamentally differing perspectives between the evaluator and decision-makers. In other words the process may "keep the evaluator's feet on the ground".

In the same context management functions can be relegated to the evaluator. Functions such as monitoring program operations (process monitoring) often become assigned to the evaluator. From a management viewpoint this diminishes the realm of control of the manager. In Lansing the Office of Evaluation Services has moved the task of process monitoring back to project managers. We attempt to build evaluation activities into the management design of the project and avoid the tendency of managers to treat evaluation as an external audit.

"The Great and Powerful Wizzard"

The evaluator has to avoid being put in the position, or assuming the position of supplying all of the answers. In some cases it may be easy for the evaluator to tell the program staff or decision-maker what to do. But it may also be important for the staff person or decision-makers to participate in the decision. The evaluator may have to "lead" the decision-maker to a decision, or help them "discover" the best alternative. The evaluator must also be able to say, "I don't know the answer" when an answer is unknown. In education the differences between competing alternatives are often outweighed by the perceived value of the alternative on the part of the person implementing it.

MATCHING

Evaluation has been inplemented in a variety of configurations. At best, these configurations match the needs and priorities of the school district(s), and programs which they serve.

In the Lansing School District, which values the autonomous decision-making model and the role of the community in decision-making, the evaluation unit places a high priority on its role as a system support service agency for decision-makers (including teachers and building level administrators).

Following the same logic, evaluators are "matched" to the programs which they serve. This occurs primarily as a self-selection process. Evaluators are generally assigned to programs in areas which they have expressed an interest, i.e., an evaluator with a background in music and performing arts may be assigned to an arts project. In cases where there is no obvious match of staff with projects, the Office of Evaluation Services has augmented its evaluators with students from Western Michigan University and Michigan State University, or special consultants.

We have found it helpful in establishing creditability and facilitating communication of evaluation findings if the values of the evaluator and the program being evaluated are perceived to be in harmony. (This is particularly evident in programs for whom the evaluation process is new).

FUTURE OF PROGRAM EVALUATION IN LANSING

A growing emphasis has been placed on training building level staff in evaluation skills. Plans are being made to offer training to volunteer building level and administration staff in evaluation, planning and needs assessment skills. As building level evaluation skills are increased, more of the responsibility for evaluation is being assumed at the building level.

Evaluation services has been making attempts at looking at the building as the unit of analysis in addition to the program as the unit of anlaysis. The Office of Evaluation Services has traditionally prepared separate reports for each of it's categorically funded programs. However, most of the programs overlap. A given school may have as many as five categorical programs existing in the building. During the 1975-76 school year, the Office of Evaluation Services prepared an evaluation of categorically funded programs, a report of the five largest funded programs in the district. The data were presented with the school as the unit of analysis. The results of the data seemed to substantiate that the greatest difference between student performance was between schools, not between programs.

By presenting the data for all of the categorically funded programs in a building, evaluation services attempted to reinforce the idea of buildings planning for their entire educational program. This process reinforces decentralization and building autonomy as described by Lansing.

As evaluation skills at the building level increase, the skills of the evaluators also increase. Evaluators are enrolled in Masters and Doctoral degree programs and have received training in areas such as, Non-Parametric Statistics, SPSS, Structured Programming, etc.

The trend appears to be for the Office of Evaluation Services to increase the range of services which it can offer. The technical skills of the staff is increasing. A greater role in training will be assumed by evaluators as they pass their skills on to building level staff. Evaluation staff will also continue to work closely with the planning unit to strengthen comprehensive planning.

As stated in this paper the authors have identified the following areas as contributing to the successful in-house evaluation unit. We have placed no criteria on these items. The items have not been validated except in the most informal sense. It is hoped that readers will be able to apply these items to their evaluation unit and use the items as a frame work for introspection and self analysis. It is hoped that the check list can elicit dialog within evaluation units so that they might reflect upon their role and priorities within the school district setting and within the community.

The questions below represent key questions which should be asked of an evaluation unit or team to help determine the utility of the unit in the school district setting.

CHECKLIST

SUCCESSFUL EVALUATION PROGRAMS

- Does the evaluation team match the program evaluated?
- Do reports address all audiences?
- Is back-up support provided to further explain reports to lay people? (i.e., do evaluators meet with community?)
- Is evaluation team involved in proposal writing process and early in program?
- Does team provide continuous process feedback to clients?
- Is the team in the field visiting project sites?
- Does evaluation division supply technical support services?
- Do evaluators possess "listening skills"?
- Do evaluators provide all the answers? (see page 19)
- Is the evaluation team perceived as creditable? (internally and externally)

- Do evaluators pass on skills to clientele? (Turn Key approach)

- To what extent do evaluators involve managers, coordinators, teachers and students, etc., in the evaluation process?

- Are resources available for the division to offer technical support to miscellaneous clients, individual classes, teachers, small projects, etc., who can't afford to contract for services?

- Does division keep abreast of innovation in field and in general education, i.e., cognitive style mapping, affective measurement, alternative education?

- Does evaluator present cautions for interpretations of data?

- To what extent do evaluators interface with decision-makers of the program being evaluated and the school district in general, i.e., does evaluator have insight into factors influencing decision-making in the school district?

The Office of Evaluation Services in Lansing performs and assists in the following services:

- proposal development
- conducting needs assessment
- identifying, collecting and analyzing program product data
- collecting and reporting achievement test data
- collecting and reporting Michigan Assessment Test data (MEAP)
- collecting, analyzing and reporting ORT data (Lansing's Instructional Management System)
- developing needs assessment survey instruments and analysis of data
- validation of locally developed testing instruments
- developing workshop/in-service evaluation instruments and analysis of data
- identification/articulation of program goals and objectives
- identification and/or development of alternative measurement instruments (cognitive and affective)
- prepare or assist in preparing SPSS programs for data analysis
- provide training in evaluation skills to school district staff
- present evaluation findings
- present testing results
- provide training in utilization of Michigan Assessment Test results

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